

**Dance Traditions - DANC 211/4 – Winter 2012**  
Contemporary Dance Department, Faculty of Fine Arts  
**Instructor: Philip Szporer**  
**Monday 2-5 p.m. – H-433**  
**Office Hours: by appointment, on Mondays** (location, TBA)  
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The course is a survey of the history of dance, focusing on Modernism, Post-Modernism and beyond.

**Course text:** There is one text for this course, *Moving History/Dancing Cultures (A Dance History Reader)*, edited by Ann Dills & Ann Cooper Albright (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2001) – available in the university bookstore. Periodically, a short article may supplement the course text, if relevant.

Please feel free to bring in exceptionally good articles, books, video clips, sound bytes that you have found so that we can share your intellectual discoveries.

**Objectives and Teaching Strategies:** The course will attempt to train students in basic research skills, the importance of historical context, the use and documentation of primary and secondary sources, the critical interpretation of texts, and the implications of methodological approaches, especially to understand and dialogue with ideas and information found through readings and class lectures and discussion. Students will write in a variety of genres, including the personal essay and research paper. They will work in groups to effectively create a collaborative project, i.e., an oral presentation, in which students utilize technological skills, make connections across course readings and experiences, integrate multiple perspectives drawn from different disciplinary and cultural contexts, and engage in critical inquiry about information and ideas.

**Summary of Criteria of Evaluation:**

1. Quiz (2):	30% (each quiz is worth 15%)
2. Field Interview (1):	5%
3. Response Essay (1):	10%
4. Group Presentation/Short Talk:	20%
5. Final Essay (1):	20%
6. Moodle Entries (5 minimum):	5%
7. Attendance/Participation:	10%

**Assignments & Exams:**

**1 - quiz (2) – 30%** (each quiz is worth 15 points) – There will be two short answer/multiple choice/mini-essay in-class quiz based on class lectures, discussion, readings, and media examples.

**2 – one (1) mock field interview – 5 % (five points).** Structure probing questions for an imagined field interview with one choreographer discussed in Lecture 1 and 2, in relation to cultural/racial diversity, intercultural/transcultural stereotypes, the construction of the "other", as well as ideas surrounding representation and notions of cultural ownership (appropriation, hybridity, authenticity). Write five (5) intelligent and informed open-ended questions based on research (see suggested reading list; and never ask questions

producing yes or no answers), also briefly detailing key points that you might imagine emanating from your questions. Typed, doubled-spaced (reasonable font size).

**3 – one (1) response paper - 10% (worth ten points).** Response essays are based on selected chapters from the assigned text. There are several types of response, but do express how you feel about a subject or identify with the subject. Use facts from the article or your own observations to support your opinion. Or pose a question about a point that you're confused about or one that you'd like cleared up; an objection you see to an argument in the reading; or a critique about the reading in general. Always write a conclusion. Typed, doubled-spaced (reasonable font size). No bibliography or footnotes required, unless warranted. Length: 500 words each.

**4 – oral presentation/Short Talk – 20% (twenty points).** This is a group project. Groups will consist of approximately 5 individuals. See below for more details.

**5- final essay – 20% (twenty points).** Written essay, length: 7 pages, not including bibliography, videography, or footnotes. See below for more details.

\*\*\*\*Please provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope, as this will be the only way to receive your marked essay.

**Policy for Writing Evaluation:** Students are evaluated on their mastery of language arts skills. To receive the best grade, you must

- Demonstrate maturity and originality of thought reflected by the ability to analyze, synthesize and evaluate.
- Sustain the development of a point or idea over the length of the assignment.
- Use organized paragraphs and transitional devices.
- Make conventional use of capitalization and punctuation.
- Use consistently the grammar, syntax and spelling of standard English or French, with particular attention to sentence structure and to agreement between subjects, verbs, pronouns and antecedents.

Assignments may be written in French or English. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with a clear font size, paginated, and include your name, a title, as well as proper citations/references (MLA), bibliography, filmography, and videography. Grades are based on clarity of expression, observational, descriptive, and analytic skills, research methods, references, footnotes and bibliography.

All assignments must be handed in hard copy, and not sent via e-mail. E-mailed assignments will only be accepted in cases of grave illness or circumstance.

#### Grading Table for the Course (Dept. of Contemporary Dance)

90-100	A+	4.3
85-89	A	4.0
80-84	A-	3.7
77-79	B+	3.3
73-76	B-	2.7
67-69	C+	2.3
63-66	C	2.0
60-62	C-	1.7
57-59	D+	1.3
53-56	D	1.0
50-52	D-	0.7



**Focus for the Group Presentation & Final Essay:** Choose an individual or a group of individuals and put into context the impact of their work. Consider the social, cultural and the aesthetic shift realized through their efforts, or conversely how socio-political, economic and cultural forces impacted their work.

**\*\*\*Each group will submit research proposals (one short paragraph) for the group presentations (due Feb. 13)**

### **Group Presentation/Short Talk Guidelines**

Group work is a very important part of many university courses, and the nature of the work world today increasingly requires individuals to have problem-solving and team-building skills. What can we learn about subjects by considering them together that we cannot learn by considering them on our own?

In this assignment, every member of the group should participate. Please keep in mind two principles: You are here i) to learn, and ii) be respectful of other points of view.

For the presentation, think about how you are going to divide the time allocated for your group. (Hint: Don't spend ten minutes on your introduction!)

What information can you present that will convey the significance of your subjects' intellectual and creative contributions efficiently and effectively? Do you want to concentrate on a single work, moment, and idea? Do you want to narrate a life story? Do you want to incorporate a story about the cultural community to which your subject belonged?

Consider the format of your presentation. Do you want to project illustrations? How can brief audio or video clips make important points?

In consultation with the instructor, you will prepare a **fifteen-minute (15) presentation** on an agreed topic. You may wish to speak either from notes or from a fully articulated text but either way you must bear the time limit in mind and be as succinct as possible in your handling of your material. That's why it's called a lightning talk! More detail (e.g. quotations from set texts or from critics, dates, etc.) can be included in a handout or in the ensuing discussion.

Your final task as presenter is to generate discussion. Prepare yourself for likely questions. Given the brief nature of the presentation simply ask students to interrupt only if absolutely necessary, instead making a note of questions to ask at the end, thereby facilitating the discussion process.

### **Checklist**

- The better the presentation and discussion, the better the learning outcome for everybody.
- Be imaginative where possible by using visual aids, projections, slides, handouts, even performance, again bearing in mind the constraints of time and ensuring that your material is directly relevant, illuminating, well-illustrated, and not merely decorative. The main points of your argument should be clearly expressed, and the structure of your presentation coherent and logical.
- The aim of the exercise is for students to research a topic and then communicate effectively the results of their work. Consequently it is important to consider both the

quality of content and of presentation. I will consider both when arriving at a mark.  
**Groups must hand in a version of their presentation (in full or in note form) immediately after the event.**

-Group oral presentations must be in English.

**6 - Blog/forum entries (through the Moodle site - 5 entries minimum) – 5% (5 pts)**

Regular participation in Moodle discussion forums/blogs is encouraged (five entries minimum), as it will easily (and moderately) boost your grade. Engage in discussion with your classmates outside the classroom setting!

**7 - attendance and participation – 10% (10 pts)**

Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of every class. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. If you miss one class, your attendance/participation mark will automatically decrease 5%, two absences 10%. Exceptions: if you have a justified absence or a bona fide emergency (for example, hospitalization) (see the Teacher and Student Handbook for department rules & definitions). Please advise early in the term if you are taking religious holidays.

Students are expected to participate actively in critical class discussions based on readings, lectures, conceptual and image research, and screenings. Here is a rough guide that will help you understand how you will be assessed for your participation grade:

- If you attend class every week and say little or nothing: 0-4
- If you attend class every week and speak, but you never do more than regurgitate the course lectures, or voice your personal opinions: 4-7
- If you attend class every week and engage in discussion, listen attentively, and what you have to say is demonstrably informed by the course readings and discussions: 8-10

**Lateness policy**

Please note that it is exceedingly disruptive to arrive late to class, and students who do so will be marked as absent. Likewise, ***students who leave early or who skip parts of the lecture will be marked as absent.*** If there are reasonable grounds to be absent for part of the class, please advise me of your situation; it is your responsibility to take the necessary measures to arrive on campus early enough. At all events, if you do end up arriving late to the lecture, or if your body demands that you leave the room temporarily, please try to be as discrete as possible in order not to disturb your fellow students. Do this by holding the door gently as it closes rather than letting it bang shut on its own.

Late work is not encouraged. If you have a valid reason for postponing assignment submissions, such as a death in the family or a serious illness, please contact me (or the Department Assistant), and we'll arrange a reasonable alternative. Otherwise, a point will be deducted for each day the paper is late (i.e., 1 or 2 points).

**Plagiarism**

The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as **"the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement"** (Article 16<sup>a</sup>).



This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone - it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. "Presentation" is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. If you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. If you cite your own work without the correct citation, this too is plagiarism.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty and to ensure you avoid committing any offenses by reading the University's Academic Code of Conduct, available at the following sites:

[http://web2.concordia.ca/Legal\\_Counsel/policies/english/AC/Code.html](http://web2.concordia.ca/Legal_Counsel/policies/english/AC/Code.html)

<http://secretariat.concordia.ca/policies/academic/en/AcademicCodeConduct2008.pdf>

### **Other Course Policies**

**Language:** The language of instruction is English. You may submit your work in French; however, my comments on your papers will normally be in English.

**Electronic Equipment:** Turn off and put away all electronic devices, i.e., mobile phones, iPods, PDAs, Blackberries, videogames, etc., unless the instructor grants you an exemption from this policy. Students breaching this policy during the lecture will be penalized on their participation grades, including a possible grade of zero for participation, at the discretion of the course instructor. Please take this warning seriously; this class is **not** the place to check Facebook, surf, text-message friends, or engage in other distracting and disruptive behaviour with electronic devices. Save it for after class or during the break. If there is a legitimate reason you must leave your mobile phone on, please notify me in advance, put the phone on vibrate mode, and sit in the front row on the aisle so you can easily depart the class to take your urgent call.

Laptop computers are acceptable for note-taking alone, and not for any other purpose.

**Food:** No food or drink in the class, other than water. If you are hungry or thirsty, take care of your needs before the session or during the break.

**Chatting in class:** Please refrain from chatting with your neighbours, out of respect for the other students and the professor. Such chatter is distracting, so please save your conversation until the class is over.

### **Campus Resources**

**Students with Disabilities:** Any student with a documented disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the professor and the Access Centre for Students with Disabilities at the beginning of the semester.

<http://supportservices.concordia.ca/disabilities/>

**Student Learning Services:** Will help to improve your academic skills and learning potential (including writing skills). <http://learning.concordia.ca/>

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Lecture 1 (Jan. 9)**

**Birth of Modern Dance:** Isadora Duncan, François Delsarte, Loie Fuller, Ruth St. Denis, Ted Shawn; plus Rudolf Laban, and Ballets Russes, including Vaslav Nijinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.

+

**Guest:** Library Orientation with dance librarian Jared Wiercinski. In class. (compulsory)

### **Lecture 2 (Jan. 16)**

**Black American Perspectives:** Josephine Baker, Katherine Dunham, Pearl Primus, Alvin Ailey.

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**Guest:** Zab Maboungou, Artistic Director of Zab Maboungou/Compagnie Nyata Nyata, speaking about notions of the African diaspora.

### **Lecture 3 (Jan. 23)**

**American Modern Dance Heroes:** Martha Graham, Erick Hawkins, Doris Humphrey, José Limon

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**German Expressionism:** Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss.

>>DUE: Assignment 1: Field Interview (due Jan. 23) - 5 points

### **Lecture 4 (Jan. 30)**

**Beyond Modernism:** Merce Cunningham, Alwin Nikolais

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**\*\*QUIZ #1 – in class – 15 points**

### **Lecture 5 (Feb. 6)**

**Post-Modernism in the U.S.:** Perspectives and concerns of the Judson Church artists and the Contact Improvisation movement (Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Lucinda Childs, Steve Paxton, Simone Forti, Meredith Monk, etc...), and the emergence of related forms and connections in Québec and Canada (EDAM, Catpoto, Andrew de Lotbinière-Harwood).

>> DUE: Assignment 2: Write a response essay to the compulsory reading (due Feb. 6) - 10 points

- Steve Paxton, "Improvisation is a Word for Something That Can't Keep a Name", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 421-426 (Feb. 6)

### **Lecture 6 (Feb. 13)**

**Parallel Universe: Québec Dancing into the 21st Century**

Consideration of social, political and cultural shifts in Québec, with emphasis on Groupe de la Place Royale, Nouvelle Aire, the major figures (Édouard Lock, Ginette Laurin, Paul-André Fortier, Marie Chouinard, Jean-Pierre-Perreault), and the rise of the independents.

>>Submit research proposals for the group presentations – no more than one paragraph is necessary.

**\*\*\*\*\*STUDY WEEK: Feb. 20 – no lecture\*\*\*\*\***



**Lecture 7 (Feb. 27)**

**II. Post-Modern Strategies - Asia**

Butoh (Japan), plus the traditional-contemporary dialectic in Asian dance.

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**Independent work/study time for group projects.**

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>> Meetings with instructor re group presentation and essay proposals (prior to class)

**Lecture 8 (Mar. 5)**

**I. Post-Modern Strategies - Europe**

The emergence of Tanztheatre in Germany (Susanne Linke, Reinhild Hoffman, Pina Bausch), plus William Forsythe.

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**Group presentations – (groups TBA)**

**Lecture 9 (Mar. 12)**

**Group presentations – (groups TBA)**

**Lecture 10 (Mar. 19)**

**III. Post-Modern Strategies - Europe**

Belgian Streams: Wim Vandekeybus, Anne T. de Keersmaecker, Alain Platel, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Meg Stuart

+

**Other contemporary currents:** Mats Ek, Jirí Kylián, Ohad Naharin.

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Guests: Two dancers from Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal will discuss company repertoire, and strategies in choreographic creation.

**Lecture 11 (Mar. 26) \*\*\*FINAL ESSAY DUE**

**African Contemporary Dance Forms & the Africanist Presence in Contemporary American Performance:** Faustin Linyekula, Salia ni Seydou, Germaine Acogny, Willa Jo Zollar, Bill T. Jones, Rennie Harris, Savion Glover.

+

**Critical Perspectives**

Dance writing and ethics, incorporating a debate of the required on-line reading.

- "Discussing the Undiscussable", Arlene Croce, *The New Yorker*, 1995, as published in Dance Connection. Calgary. 13(2) (June/July/Aug. 1995): 20-28.

**Lecture 12 (Apr. 2)**

**Dancing for the Screen – Canadian Perspectives**

A survey of dance for camera creations and the development of this genre in Canada.

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**\*\*QUIZ #2 – in class – 15 points**

#### Readings for Danc 211/4:

- Ann Daly, "The Natural Body", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 288-299. **(Jan. 9)**
- Ramsay Burt, "The Trouble with the Male Dancer", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 44-55. **(Jan. 9)**
- Millicent Hodson, "Searching for Nijinsky's Score", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 17-29. **(Jan. 9)**
- Thomas DeFrantz, "Simmering Passivity: The Black Male Body in Concert Dance", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 342-349. **(Jan. 16)**
- Brenda Dixon Gottschild, "Stripping the Emperor: The Africanist Presence in American Concert Dance", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 332-341. **(Jan 16)**
- Susan Allene Manning & Melissa Benson, "Interrupted Continuities: Modern Dance in Germany", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 218-227. **(Jan. 23)**
- Deborah Jowitt, "Form as the Image of Human Perfectibility and Natural Order", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 300-306. **(Jan. 23)**
- Marcia Siegel, "The Harsh and Splendid Heroines of Martha Graham", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 307-314. **(Jan. 23)**
- Deborah Jowitt, "Chance Heroes", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 362-364. **(Jan. 30)**
- Peter Ryan, "10000 Jams Later: Contact Improvisation in Canada, 1974-95", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 414-420. **(Jan. 30)**
- Steve Paxton, "Improvisation is a Word for Something That Can't Keep a Name", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 421-426 **(Jan. 30)**
- Sally Banes, "Choreographic Methods of the Judson Dance Theater", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 350-361. **(Jan. 30)**
- Iro Tembeck, "The Flowering of the Independents", in *Dancing in Montreal*. Madison, WI.: Studies in Dance History, The Journal of the Society of Dance History Scholars, pg 79-98. **(Feb. 13)**
- Ananya Chatterjea, "Chandralekha: Negotiating the Female Body...", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 389-397 **(Feb. 27)**
- Bonnie Sue Stein, "Butoh: "Twenty Years Ago We Were Crazy, Dirty and Mad", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 376-383 **(Feb. 27)**
- Uttara Coorlawala, "Ananya and Chandralekha – A Response...", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 398-403 **(Feb. 27)**
- Kariamu Welsh Asante, "Commonalities in African Dance: An Aesthetic Foundation", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 144-151. **(Mar. 26)**
- Ann Cooper Albright, "Embodying History: Epic Narrative and Cultural Identity in African American Dance", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 439-454. **(Mar. 26)**
- Ann Dils, "Absent Present", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 462-471. **(Mar. 26)**
- Deborah Jowitt, "Writing Beneath the Surface", in *Moving History/Dancing Cultures*, pp. 7-11 **(Mar. 26)**
- Arlene Croce, "Discussing the undiscussable: or is it dissing the undissable?" *Dance Connection* v.13 no.2 p.20 Year: 1995-06-01, pp. 20-28 **(Mar. 26)**